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ABSTRACT

A description is provided of the Urban League's Education Initiative Project, a cooperative effort involving Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) and feeder high schools in activities designed to raise the aspirations of black high school students, motivate them to enroll and succeed in college preparatory courses, facilitate the flow of students from high school to MDCC to a four-year university, and finance the college education of successful students. Section I provides an introduction to the project, as well as information on the problem of underachievement among black students in Miami, the goals of the project, the target student population, and the program design, implementation, and management. Sections II through IV focus on specific components of the project. Section II describes the Black Student Opportunity Mentor Program, which selected 75 mentors from a broad range of organizations and career groups to serve as positive reference group models. Section III highlights the Black Student Opportunity Scholarship Program, which rewards students financially for academic achievement in designated college preparatory courses. Finally, section IV examines the Black Student Opportunity Academic Preparation Program, which focuses on the development of students' self-management skills and of an educational and personal development plan, while providing instructional support. (MDB)

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Partners in Education
Black Student
Opportunity Program

In Cooperation with
The Dade County Public Schools
The United Teachers of Dade
Miami-Dade Community College
The Urban League of Greater Miami
and the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation

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Miami-Dade
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Number one in America.

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SECTION I

GENERAL CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION

Black Americans are the beneficiaries of great historical achievements. Since their emancipation from slavery, they have made significant contributions to American society despite their previous isolated status and condition of servitude in this country.

Since the 1954 Brown decision in which the Supreme Court declared the "Separate But Equal" doctrine illegal, a wide disparity continues to exist between black Americans and other groups. Increased poverty, high unemployment, increased family instability, rising teenage pregnancy, alarming levels of male incarceration, high numbers of school dropouts, and deficient academic performance as measured by standardized test results -- are all negative indicators of depressed conditions within many black American communities.

In its annual report on the "State of Black America," the National Urban League recognizes the impact of these negative conditions on the future development of black Americans. The Urban League and other national black organizations have concluded that black Americans must assume greater responsibility for their own development and management.

To ameliorate these negative conditions, the Urban League organized an Education Initiative in more than 50 communities, including 30 of the largest school districts in the country. The league recognizes that a significant effort must be made to improve the intellectual development of black youths. The major theme and focus of the Education Initiative is based upon the concept of "Equal Results For Equal Participation." This concept places heavy responsibility on each student to become actively involved in the learning process as a means to maximum intellectual development.

The National Urban League further recognizes that the effective implementation of the Education Initiative Project requires the cooperative participation of major partners in the educational enterprise. These partners include the educational establishment, parents, as well as, other institutions and organizations within the larger community.

Two local leaders provided the spark for a partnership team to emerge in Miami. Mr. William Turner, a member of the Dade County School Board, and Mr. T. Willard Fair, President of the Urban League of Greater Miami, persuaded Dr. Leonard Britton, Superintendent of the Dade County Public Schools, to take major responsibility for the leadership of the initiative. Several other concerned leaders were recruited to work on the project. Dr. Robert McCabe, President of Miami-Dade Community College; Mr. Pat Tornillo, President of the United Teachers of Dade; Mr. Louis Wolfson III, Chairman of the $5 million Margin of Excellence Campaign for the Miami-Dade Community College Foundation; and Mr. Arthur Hertz, Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation -- all quickly committed the resources of their respective institutions to the project.

The partners in the Education Initiative recognize that this will be no easy undertaking. Each recognizes the seriousness and magnitude of the problem and has agreed to make the necessary improvements or changes in personnel, programs, services, and resources to bring about the desirable results.

The nature and scope of the Education Initiative requires a thorough examination of factors contributing to black underachievement and the required strategies and resources needed to overcome the deficiencies.

PROBLEM AND SCOPE

A plethora of research and writing has been undertaken to explain the wide intellectual performance gap that exists between black and white Americans as measured by instruments such as standardized tests.

The traditional explanations offered -- laziness or inferiority, on the one hand, racism, discrimination, poverty, cultural deprivation, and biased tests are clearly inadequate explanations to account for the wide differences that exist, even among high income black Americans.

An emerging body of opinions and research appears to indicate that the performance gap is largely a behavioral problem. Howard and Hammond offer a hypothesis to explain the differences. They say:

> Black performance problems are caused, in large part, by a tendency to avoid intellectual competition.

Astin and others confirm that as a group, many black students tend to avoid college preparatory courses in the sciences, mathematics, and information skill areas which are required for college level competition.

Howard and Hammond explain:

> This tendency is a psychological phenomenon that arises when the larger society projects an image of black intellectual inferiority, and when that image is internalized by black people.

They further assert:

> Imputing intellectual inferiority to genetic causes, especially in the face of data confirming poorer performance, intensifies the fears and doubts that surround this issue.

A body of psychological research establishes clear linkage between expectancies and performance. The research in this area confirms that:

> Communicated expectations influence people to believe that they will do well or poorly at a task, and that such beliefs very often trigger responses that result in performance consistent with the expectations.

And that further:

> "Reference group expectancies" -- directed at an entire category of people rather than a particular individual -- have a similar impact on the performance of members of the group.

The learning process is a personal undertaking that requires time, discipline, and intense effort. As indicated earlier, the process is highly influenced by credible reference group expectancies (i.e. expectancies communicated by teachers, parents, and other groups and institutions represent a credible reference group). The message from these groups is powerful in that it communicates expressions of belief -- verbal or nonverbal about the level of performance that is expected.

The educational development of blacks in America has occurred under a cloud of suspicion about their intellectual abilities to compete within a society that has been particularly hostile to their educational development.

The widespread expectation of black intellectual inferiority -- communicated constantly through the projection of stereotyped images, verbal and nonverbal exchanges in daily interaction, and the incessant debate about genetics and intelligence -- represents a negative, credible reference group expectancy (Howard and Hammond).

These expectancies raise fear and self-doubt in the minds of many blacks, especially when they are young and vulnerable. This has caused many talented blacks to avoid intellectual activity, thus, resulting in chronic underperformance.

Further research in social psychology reveals that expectancies affect behavior in two ways. They affect performance behavior, the capacity to marshal the sharpness and intensity required for competitive success; and

secondly, they influence cognition, the mental processes by which people rationalize the occurrences of everyday life.

Credible expectancies, thus, affect the intensity of effort, the level of concentration or distractibility, and the willingness to take reasonable risk -- a key factor in the development of self-confidence and new skills.

Credible expectancies also influence the way people think about or explain their performance outcomes. Psychological studies demonstrate that the causes to which people attribute their successes and failures have an important impact on subsequent performance.

The learning process is a succession of successes and failures. Those who attribute their failures to inadequate effort are more than likely to conclude that more effort will produce a better outcome. This represents a healthy attitude toward failure. In contrast, those who have been led to expect failure will attribute their failures to lack of ability. This internalization of failure makes it difficult for one to rationalize the investment of greater effort to achieve a desirable result.

Howard and Hammond describe:

> This combined effect on behavior and cognition is what makes expectancy so powerful. The negative expectancy first tends to generate failure through its impact on behavior and then influences the individual to blame the failure on lack of ability, rather than the actual (and correctable) problem of inadequate effort.

They explain:

> This misattribution, in turn, becomes the basis for a negative expectancy. By this process, the individual, in effect, internalizes the low estimation originally held by others. This internalized negative expectancy powerfully affects future competitive behavior and future results.

This phenomenon, while shared by other groups, is unique to black people since they are singled out and stigmatized for presumed genetic intellectual inferiority based upon their biology. Thus, each engagement

in intellectual competition carries the weight of a test of one's own genetic endowment and that of black people as a whole. Facing such a terrible prospect, many black people recoil from any situation where the powerful rumor of inferiority might be proved true.

On the other hand, positive expectancies can generate self- confidence and result in success.

The Urban League Education Initiative recognizes that the solution to black performance problems is converting the negative expectancies that work against black intellectual development into positive expectancies that nurture it. Black communities must now inspire the same commitment to intellectual excellence that is routinely accorded athletics and entertainment.

The major outcome of the Urban League Education Initiative is to restore the "intellectual work ethic" within the major institutions of the black community including the family, church, neighborhood hangout, and social and fraternal organizations for the purpose of teaching the efficacy of intense, committed effort in the arena of intellectual activity and the techniques to develop discipline in study and work habits.

The Urban League Education Initiative is designed to overcome fears, encourage competition, and support the kind of performance that will dispel the notion of black intellectual inferiority. This will be accomplished by marshalling and encouraging positive expectancies of credible reference groups, i.e., teachers, parents, role models (mentors), the media, and the larger community in order to bring about a climate for effective learning and achievement within schools around the country and the Northwestern High School feeder pattern in Miami.

The magnitude of this task requires major modification in the behavior of those who wish to affect positive changes designed to improve the intellectual performance of black children.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Partners in the Education Initiative Project in Miami have reached consensus that the major focus of the project will be to improve the level of academic performance of black students in the Northwestern High School feeder pattern and to offer merit incentives to students who persist and perform as successful high school graduates.

Each of the schools in the pilot project are expected to develop a plan that will improve the level of academic performance of the student body. The plan will assume that there are key factors in each of the school situations that will enhance positive student achievement.

In the previous discussion, it was recognized that achievement is highly influenced by credible reference-group expectancies.

An overview of the literature indicates that student achievement is also linked to other factors including: student behavior, teacher behavior, the nature of supervision, school climate and leadership (Squires, Huitt, and Segars). Factors external to the school such as parental and community support and expectations will also be examined as contributing to student achievement.

Classroom related research confirms that students perform better on standardized achievement tests in basic skills when they have been actively involved in and successful on content for which they are academically prepared, and which is closely related to the content tested.

This suggests that the school's academic program should be centered around increasing student involvement, improving coverage of appropriate content, and providing opportunities to perform successfully on the concepts and skills.

Three levels of teacher behavior are cited in the literature as having the greatest impact upon student achievement. They are: (1) Planning, which is the process of selecting objectives, diagnosing learner characteristics, and selecting appropriate instruction and management strategies (Peterson, Marx, and Clark, 1978); (2) Classroom management, which includes all the skills and techniques that are primarily designed to direct student behavior toward involvement, coverage, and success (Anderson, Evertson, and Emmer, 1979); and (3) Instruction -- a synthesis of the research regarding classroom characteristics and instructional methods point to a number of behaviors that appear to characterize quality instruction (Anderson and Block, 1977; Bloom, 1976; Block and Burns, 1976). The most effective teacher behaviors in this area are summarized under the following: presentation, practice, performance, and feedback. These professional skills can be developed through a positive supervisory process.

The nature of supervisory behavior creates the opportunity for increasing teachers' skills in planning, managing, and delivering instruction. In the process of supervision, the supervisor and the teacher explore the meaning in the patterns of their professional behavior. The goal of positive supervision is to improve the organization's capability to deliver valued outcomes (student achievement is a valued outcome) through the supervisor's and teacher's increased competence in performing their roles. The close professional working relationship between the

supervisor and the teacher sets a tone for an effective school climate that promotes high expectation for achievement.

School climate and leadership, thus, become the final internal components for improving student achievement. Clearly, the most effective behavior for school climate is academic emphasis at every level of the school organization. The second most effective behavior is an orderly environment that is non-threatening and provides for flexibility and freedom to pursue knowledge.

When the leadership of the school, including teachers and principals, is able to provide good modeling behavior, effective feedback to participants, and a shared decision-making model for consensus building -- then student achievement will occur and be nurtured as the highest value of the school.

When these behaviors are supported by the parents and other organizations and institutions within the larger community, a powerful positive reference group expectancy is formed. This, then, becomes the basis for the design of a partnership program to improve the level of black student achievement in the Northwestern High School feeder pattern.

GOALS

The goal of the Education Initiative is to improve black student performance as measured by standardized test results. The program strategies are intended to address four major issues identified as impeding the educational persistence of black students. These impediments are summarized as: (1) Inadequate academic preparation to compete at college level; (2) Lack of a unified solid network of positive reference-group

expectancies; (3) Lack of a long-range career development plan and (4) Inadequate institutional and financial assistance.

McCabe identifies four major program objectives for addressing the issues impeding black student achievement. They are:

1. Raise the aspirations of a significant number of black students who are enrolled in high schools which have been targeted by the Urban League for a model college preparatory program.
2. Motivate a significant number of black high school students to enroll in college preparatory courses which develop strong information skills, and motivate these students to a higher level of academic achievement.
3. Facilitate the progress of targeted high school participants to enable the earning of an Associate in Arts degree at Miami-Dade to successful transfer to a university for completion of a bachelor's degree.
4. Finance the college education of successful students.

TARGET STUDENT POPULATION

The Dade County Black Student Opportunity Program will be implemented as one of the components of the Education Initiative. The pilot project will target 75 students beginning at the 10th grade level in the fall 1987 school term. Fifty students will be selected from the Northwestern Senior High School and 25 from a designated public senior high school with a sizable black student population in the south area of the county.

The process for student selection and participation will be the joint responsibility of the Urban League and the Dade County Public Schools,

including the United Teachers of Dade. The student selection process will specify the method of identification, recruitment, screening, selection, orientation, participation, placement, follow-up, and evaluation.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The program is intended to extend over a seven year period commencing with the fall 1987 school term and terminating at the end of the 1994 school year. This period will consist of three years of high school preparation, leading to a high school diploma; two years of undergraduate preparation, leading to an Associate in Arts degree at Miami-Dade; and two years of undergraduate preparation, leading to a bachelor's degree at a senior level institution.

The program design and plan for implementation will focus on four models to address the four major issues and objectives of the project. These are:

1. Academic preparation
2. Career planning
3. Positive reference-group expectancy
4. Institutional and financial support

Academic Preparation Model

The high school and Miami-Dade staff will work jointly to design an appropriate program for academic preparation. An academic skills assessment program will be implemented to determine the basic skills level of each student and the appropriate course selection to prepare students to pass the M-DCC placement examination prior to college admission.

Students who need additional assistance will be required to spend extra time improving their levels of academic competence. An organized

program of basic skills development will be provided. The program will orient students to the following: test taking techniques, study skills, time management habits, and critical thinking.

Miami-Dade will utilize two computerized student systems to provide individualized feedback to students and their parents regarding the level of academic progress. These systems are: (1) Academic Alert and Assessment -- which generates computerized individual letters that are sent out six weeks into the term. These letters inform students whether or not their academic progress and attendance are satisfactory in specific courses. The computer program gathers information about the student's credit load, previous performance, native language, basic skills, attendance, and produces the personalized student letter in time for the student to effect change where needed; (2) Advisement and Graduation Information System (AGIS) -- a system of computerized reports that provide complete information to M-DCC students about their progress through the program they have selected. AGIS reports show assessment scores, courses completed, courses necessary for completion of a degree or program, and courses necessary for smooth transfer to the state university system or a private college.

In summary, the academic preparation model will be designed to improve student behavior in three areas: (1) Involvement -- the amount of time a student actively works on academic content; (2) Coverage -- the amount of content covered by a student during a year, especially content tested by a standardized instrument; and (3) Success -- how well students perform on daily classroom and home assignments, and unit tests including mastery of academic content.

Career Planning Model

The high school and Miami-Dade staff will work jointly to design an appropriate program for career planning and development. In order to be effective, the career planning model should be based on a wholistic assessment of the student's skills, abilities, interests, and personality variables for success (i.e., self-concept of ability, locus of control, and expectancy of success and failure).

The Florida Choice System for career planning should be utilized to assess career interest. Assessment results should be used for career advisement sessions with students, parents, and mentors. Additional activities should be planned such as visits to business and industry, and student participation in the "Boss for A Day" program conducted by the Metro Miami Action Plan in cooperation with the public schools. Provisions for summer work internship programs should be a part of the career planning model in order to provide students with a more pragmatic view of the world of work.

Major emphasis in the career planning and guidance process should make each student aware of and on target for the subgoals for each grade level (see Appendix A).

Positive Reference Group Expectancy Model

The literature strongly suggests that positive expectations from credible reference groups affects behavior and cognition. In this regard, a well organized program for parent, mentor (surrogate parent) and community participation and support will be planned.

In addition, each of the feeder school clusters will provide an effective school program to improve teacher and staff behaviors, super-

vision, leadership, and school climate conducive to learning and achievement.

The Urban League will be responsible for the development of a program for mentor and community participation. The program will specify the method for the identification, recruitment, screening, selection, orientation, participation, assignment, and evaluation of mentors and community groups and organizations.

The Urban League and school system including the United Teachers of Dade will be responsible for the joint development of a program for parent participation and support. The program will specify the method of orientation, participation, follow-up, and evaluation.

The major outcome of this program model will be the following: (1) Deliberate control of expectancy communications; (2) Influencing thought processes to encourage students to attribute their intellectual successes to ability, and their failures to lack of effort, thereby boosting confidence; and (3) Emphasizing the "intellectual work ethic" at all levels of community and student interaction.

Institutional and Financial Assistance Model

McCabe outlines a program for institutional and financial assistance in the proposal entitled "Dade County Black Student Opportunity Program." The proposal describes the manner in which student performance is to be rewarded. Essentially, each student will be rewarded for performance based upon an annual accumulated grade point average in four designated college preparatory courses. Funds will accumulate into a "bank account" established in the name of each student participant.

The earned value of each grade at the high school level will be based upon the following value system: for each "C", $30 will be placed in the

bank; for each "B", $60; and for each "A", $90. Assuming a student would earn a "B" average in each of the four designated subjects during the first year, then he or she would have placed into their "bank account" a total of $240 by the student's sponsor. The Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation would match this amount, thus, providing the student with an amount of $480 for the first year.

The college will be responsible for monitoring this system in cooperation with the designated bank where the account will be established. The Urban League will be responsible for soliciting a donor for each of the 75 students. The college will be responsible for obtaining the commitment of senior institutions that wish to participate in the program. Each of the universities that commit to participate will be responsible for selecting one or more students and establishing a scholarship in their names.

As students enter Miami-Dade for the first two years of study, funds will accumulate at an earned rate of $40 for a "C", $80 for a "B", and $120 for an "A", again, with the first match by the student's donor and the second match by the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation (see Appendix B for full scholarship program).

The college will assist the Urban League to market the program to attract potential donors. In addition to the scholarship program, Miami-Dade and the cooperating universities will provide institutional support through the provision of federal financial assistance to students who qualify, as well as, academic support for students who require it.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Dade County Public Schools has agreed to a decentralized management approach to provide flexibility for each of the feeder schools and

partners to plan and carry out strategies to increase student achievement and academic preparation, high school and college completion, parent and community involvement, and shared decision-making.

The key to the success of this approach is to ensure appropriate coordination at all levels. The use of cluster task force groups at each of the feeder schools, Miami-Dade, and the Urban League would allow appropriate personnel to plan together.

Moreover, the systemwide steering committee composed of representatives from each of the partners, will provide major direction to ensure the success of the project. In addition to its coordination, monitoring, and evaluation functions, the steering committee will also establish a schedule for implementation of critical decisions.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDED SUBGOALS FOR EACH GRADE LEVEL

RECOMMENDED SUBGOALS FOR EACH GRADE LEVEL

For eighth grade students:

- Understanding the nature of preparation for the desired field of study.
- Guiding student toward a college preparatory sequence in high school.
- Providing students with opportunities to observe college level teaching.
- Increasing the student's desire to learn.
- Providing students with a beginning understanding of our changing technology.

For ninth grade students:

- Assisting students to improve their communication skills.
- Assisting students to improve their problem solving skills.
- Assisting students to remain in the college preparatory sequence.
- Continuing efforts to achieve the eighth grade subgoals.

For tenth grade students:

- Assisting students to become self-learners.
- Assisting students to understand the nature of science, mathematics, and the communication skills.
- Providing students with opportunities to plan and carry out research projects.
- Providing students with opportunities to present papers at seminars.
- Assisting students to gain in confidence and self-esteem.
- Continuing efforts to achieve the eighth and ninth grade subgoals.

For eleventh grade students:

- Stimulating students to participate in national, state, and local competitions: science olympiad and science talent search, essay writing contests, brain bowl, etc.
- Stimulating students to apply for participation in summer university science institutes and related programs in other disciplines.
- Continuing efforts to assist students to get closer to the goals listed for the eighth, ninth, and tenth grade students.
- Preparing students for ACT, SAT, and MAPPS.

For twelfth grade students:

- Assisting students in making career selections.
- Assisting students in selecting Miami-Dade or other institutions of higher education.
- Providing a variety of opportunities for students to make presentations.
- Continuing to assist students working toward the goals defined for eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students.

APPENDIX B

MODEL FUNDING

MODEL FUNDING

YEAR	SPONSOR	WOLFSON FOUNDATION	COOPERATING UNIVERSITY	FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR SCHOLARSHIP
10th Grade	$ 240	$ 240		
11th Grade	$ 240	$ 240		
12th Grade	$ 240	$ 240		
Freshman Year	$ 400	$ 400		$ 720*/**
Sophomore Year	$ 400	$ 400		$ 720
Junior Year			$ 800	$1,600**
Senior Year			$ 800	$1,600**
	$1,520	$1,520	$1,600	$4,640

* M-DCC fees estimated at $720 per year.

** It is expected that students would be eligible for additional federal and/or institutional aid to complete a full package.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

PARTICIPATING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Barry University

Bennett College

Central State University/Ohio

Eastern Michigan University

Florida A & M University

Florida Atlantic University

Florida International University

Florida State University

General Motors Technical Institute

Hood College (Women's College)

Howard University

Northwestern College of Chiropractic

Nova University

Princeton University (Considering)

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Rollins University

Saint Thomas University (Considering)

State University of New York/ College at Purchase

Texas A & M University

University of Florida

University of Miami

University of North Carolina

University of North Florida (Considering)

University of South Florida

University of Pennsylvania (Considering)

University of West Florida

Wesleyan University

SECTION II

BLACK STUDENT OPPORTUNITY MENTOR PROGRAM

RATIONALE AND ANALYSIS

The family and other significant people play a very important role in the intellectual development of children.

Today, many black students who attend our nation's inner city schools are products of one parent families, the majority of which are households headed by females. This is a recent phenomenon in the history of black America. Even though blacks were stripped of their family, tribal, historical, and language identity, they managed to emerge from the Reconstruction period with a large percentage of their families headed by black fathers. Households headed by fathers were the norm in the 1880s. During this period, households headed by black fathers represented about 84 percent of black rural families and about 72 percent of black urban families (Poussaint).

In 1905 about 85 percent of New York City's black households were headed by men. In 1925 in Harlem, five in six black children lived in homes with both a father and a mother present (Poussaint). These facts indicate remarkable father commitment and stability when we consider that most black men were at the bottom of the economic scale in the most menial jobs.

Many scholars believe that contributing most to the stability of family and community relationships is the participation rate of black males in the labor force. Black males in the labor force in their early twenties reached a peak of 92.3 percent in 1953, compared to 85.6 in 1948 and 89.4 percent in 1964 (Ross and Hill). It is clear that the period since the end of the Korean War has been one of retrogression rather than progress for the masses of black Americans. Similarly, the high incidence

of black male unemployment following the Korean War witnessed an increase in the instability of black families.

The postwar transformation of the American economy that produced a shift from unskilled and semiskilled jobs in manufacturing, to white collar and skilled jobs in an emerging service related economy, displaced millions of unskilled black males from the labor force. Unable to be absorbed in the labor force, many of these men and their children have become the large surplus labor reserve found standing idle in many of the nation's urban centers.

The displacement of large numbers of black males from the work force and as traditional heads of households, places a strain on positive male and female relationships.

Moreover, other demographic and socioeconomic factors have contributed to the large increase in the number of black female headed households. One, is simply the fact that there is a shortage of black males to serve as fathers. There are about 89 black males for every 100 black females (Poussaint). This discrepancy is due to a number of factors including: black men have a lower life expectancy than black women; die at a young age from homicide, accidents, and suicide; are often in prison and drug addicted; have a higher rate of severe mental disorder than black women.

These conditions have placed a severe burden on female heads of households who have the added responsibilities of parenting while at the same time attempting to provide for the education of their children. These conditions are further aggravated by a decline in the influence of the extended family network that once served as an additional support system for child rearing.

The impact of urbanization; shift to new technology and service jobs; high black male unemployment; changing societal attitude toward women, sex, and families; and massive dislocation of black families from their traditional community roots, have contributed to the demise of a community support system of significant other persons who once acted as positive reference group models for children from fatherless families.

The large increase in the black underclass is accompanied by what Freire describes as the emergence of a necrophilic cultural syndrome characterized by an emphasis upon "having" rather than a striving to achieve or become. The preponderance of this pattern of behavior is displacing traditional beliefs and norms about improving one's self through hard work and intellectual effort.

As a consequence, many black children who are entering our inner city schools are bringing with them a perception of their "Being", as characterized by an attitude of, "to be", is "to be like", and "to be like" is to emulate the images and behaviors of negative role models of the community and larger society (Freire). On the other hand, students who prescribe to increasing their competence through the application of extra intellectual efforts find themselves in the minority and outside the larger peer group culture of many of our inner city schools.

The central problem thus becomes: How can inner city schools elevate the attitude of the increasing number of underachieving students to a higher level of intellectual development.

The solution to this problem cannot be achieved in idealistic terms or through the proliferation of special programs of false generosity and remediation, too many of which are designed to pacify rather than to liberate.

In order to assist students in maximizing their intellectual potential, we must guide them in critically confronting the reality of their intellectual condition. A mere perception of this reality not followed by critical reflection and action, will result in no change in their academic underachievement.

Secondly, the conditions for change must be initiated by the educational leadership of inner city schools. A process for altering the public perception of inner city schools as domesticating institutions -- accepting and tolerating poor performance and mediocrity as uncorrectable conditions of black students -- must be undertaken. To overcome this negative public perception, inner city schools must establish and market themselves as liberating institutions enabling students to create, to construct, to inquire, to venture, and to transform the conditions with which they find themselves confronted.

Thirdly, inner city schools cannot do this alone. The educational leadership must seek out and form networks of positive community support from key individuals, organizations, and institutions that are desirous of assisting in the intellectual development of black youth. This network should first be initiated with black organizations and institutions that have a stake in the salvation of their children and community. A positive reference group should be recruited and utilized as a change agent to inspire black students to a higher level of academic achievement. This group should be organized and developed as a new urban education strategy for the re-establishment of a significant community support system for the schools in our inner cities. Other groups from the majority community may provide support through a greater enfranchisement of opportunities to assist blacks to establish economic infrastructures to provide a solid

foundation for the employment of black males and females in their prime years.

GOALS

The literature strongly suggests that positive expectations from credible reference groups favorably impact the behavior and cognition of black students. The Urban League Education Initiative recognizes this as a strategy for transforming the negative expectancies that work against black intellectual development into positive expectancies that nurture it. McCabe outlines the following major goals:

1. Raising the level of aspiration of a significant number of black students enrolled in the Northwestern and Southridge High Schools which have been targeted by the Urban League for a model college preparatory program.

2. Motivating a significant number of black high school students in the target schools to enroll in college preparatory courses which develop strong information skills -- writing, computation, critical thinking, and reading comprehension.

3. Facilitating the progress of the targeted high school participants to enable the earning of an associate in arts degree at Miami-Dade to successful transfer to a university for completion of a bachelor's degree.

4. Financing the college education of successful students.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Mentor Selection

The Urban League will select 75 mentors to participate in the Black Student Opportunity Mentor Program. These mentors will serve as positive reference group models. They will be recruited from a broad range of organizations and career groups in order to match the career interests of the student population. Selection criteria will consist of the following:

1. Good character and personal integrity with a genuine interest and caring for students.

2. Demonstrated success in one's area of expertise.

3. Time commitment to work with students in individual and group settings.

4. Facility in establishing and maintaining horizontal student and parent relationships such that mentor's value system and authority do not become imposed upon the mentor-student relationship.

The Urban League will market the mentor program through articles in the Miami Times as well as through letters to key black organizations including fraternities, sororities, churches, and professional and business associations.

An application, screening, and selection process and procedure will be established to obtain the most desirable mentor-student match.

The overall program design will be structured to encourage mentor-student dialogue for critical reflection and action designed to achieve improved student achievement.

Orientation and Training

Staff from the Urban League, college, and school system will hold an initial orientation and training session to familiarize and orient mentors and parents to the Black Student Opportunity Program. Major emphasis will be given to the sharing of ideas, successes, problems, and solutions of similar mentor programs. General guidelines will also be shared in order to ensure smooth working relationships.

General Guidelines

- o Mentor-student contacts -- In the initial months, while a relationship is being established, individual meetings should be confined to meetings of an hour or more at least once per month. In addition, the Urban League, college, and school staff will organize planned monthly group sessions that will feature guest speakers from various fields of interest. Students will be provided an opportunity to inquire and utilize the session for critical dialogue and analysis of their own individual and group goals for improved changes.
- o Mentor-student meeting places -- In order to broaden the students career exposure and interest, it is suggested that meetings be held initially in the places where the mentors work or in places associated with their careers. This will enable students to become familiar with a career, engages them in what they are seeing, and take some of the "edge" off the initial meetings. The initial meetings are designed to put the mentors also at ease, since they may feel more comfortable in talking about their work and sharing it with the students.
- o Mentor role as a good listener, coach, and guide -- Mentors need to stimulate students to talk about their interests, goals, and aspirations, help students to shape their own thinking about what they want to be, and guide them in directions that build on their strength and further their ambitions. At the same time, the mentors should make sure that students understand all the steps along the way, how long it takes to get there, and the strategies for preparing for a college of their choice.

- Mentor role in the college application process -- Since all students will be attending Miami-Dade for the first two years, the mentors will need to attend workshops organized by the college to familiarize students with all of the programs and procedures for entering Miami-Dade. Mentor workshops will be held on the financial aid process including the various types of student aid that the students may be eligible to receive.

- Mentor-parent relationship -- It is extremely important that the preferences of parents be taken into account. In this regard, the Urban League, college, and school staff will initiate informal settings to facilitate the development of good mentor-parent relationships. The following are areas that mentors should be extremely sensitive to:

  1. The mentor is not the student's substitute parent and does not take on the role of a parent.
  2. The mentor should not give the student money.
  3. The mentor should avoid any situation that could be misconstrued as suggesting an interest in intimacy.

- Mentor role in problem identification and request for assistance -- Each mentor will be assigned a contact person at the local school or Urban League. Whenever a problem is identified that requires some attention, the mentor is instructed to make contact with the appropriate person. All confidential information will be handled appropriately.

- Length of mentor role -- It is expected that mentors will commit their time to at least a year; however, the relationship may be extended longer based upon the level of interest and commitment of each mentor.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Urban League, college, and school staff will work cooperatively to design evaluation instruments to determine the effectiveness of the program as it relates to the following outcome indicators:

- Retention rate
- Academic performance as measured by GPA in college preparatory courses
- School attendance pattern
- Self-concept of ability, locus of control, and expectancy of success and failure

A comparable control group will be utilized to measure the level of significance in the above variables. A pre- and post-analysis will be conducted on an annual basis to assess the level of progress or non-progress. A report of the results will be published and disseminated.

In addition, a monitoring system will be established at the local school level to assess the progress or non-progress of each student on a three week interval.

SECTION III

BLACK STUDENT OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

RATIONALE

The national percentage of black high school graduates who went on to college nearly equaled the percentage of white students for the first time in 1975, which was the peak year of black participation in higher education. Since 1980, there has been a steady decline in black college enrollment despite an increase in the total number of black students graduating from high school.

These national trends are consistent with black enrollment data presented by the Florida Institute of Education. The percentage of full-time black students enrolled in Florida's state community colleges showed a peak enrollment of 14.3 percent in 1977. Since that time, however, there has been a steady decline in the number and percentage of black students enrolled in the state's community college system.

Similar declines are also observed in the Florida State University System, as shown in the following trends: 10.4 percent (1977-78); 9.9 percent (1978-79); 9.9 percent (1979-80); 9.4 percent (1980-81); 8.9 percent (1981-82); and 8.3 percent (1982-83).

These trends also parallel the decreasing percentage of bachelor degrees conferred upon blacks. These trends are expected to continue unless there are serious interventions to increase the college attendance rate and level of retention.

The importance of these trends should be reviewed within the changing demographic trends of the American population. Blacks and other minorities -- primarily the Hispanic groups -- are projected to account for slightly more than 21 percent of the additions to the labor force, and will constitute one out of three Americans by the turn of the century.

This is due primarily to a decline in the white birth rate and the aging of that segment of the population.

This takes on a level of significance and concern as one views the disproportionate number of blacks and Hispanics who live in poverty. This condition alone places a heavy burden upon the groups' ability to break the cycle of poverty and escape the oppressive conditions of their current status.

These conditions make it difficult to provide more access for a larger proportion of blacks and other educationally-at-risk students. Despite these conditions, many blacks and other minority students are still able to elevate themselves out of the cycle of poverty.

During this period of black enrollment decline, a significant decrease in the percentage of financial assistance awarded to them was observed in the State of Florida. This trend began in 1977-78 when 41.1 percent of financial aid was awarded to blacks. By 1983-84 blacks received 22.8 percent. Comparatively, aid to whites increased from 44.7 percent to 57.4 percent during this same period. Financial aid to minorities other than blacks increased from 14.2 percent to 19.5 percent.

These trends occurred during a period when the Reagan administration proposed drastic cuts in federal financial assistance to students. The growing national deficit produced a shift in the ratio of student grants to loans. Despite the reluctance of Congress to cut funds for student financial assistance, total federal aid has dropped 14 percent in constant dollars since 1981. What is more alarming is the fact that 62 percent of the 1985-86 federal aid package represented loans to students and their parents. Ten years ago, loans accounted for only 20 percent of the package.

This problem is compounded for families of the poor and near poor, who are seeking to finance the education of their children. Due to their low income status, many families do not possess the credit rating and income potential for loans to pay for the escalating cost of college attendance. Unless some other form of financial assistance becomes available, many of the children of the poor will not be able to attend college.

The rationale for the establishment of a black scholarship fund for successful black and other minority students must take precedence, not only for their survival as a group, but for the economic well-being of the nation.

An investment in the education of blacks and other educationally-at-risk students is, without a doubt, the most important capital investment in the future of America as it seeks to retain its competitive edge in a global economy.

GOAL

The primary goal of the Black Student Opportunity Scholarship Program is to increase the pool of well prepared black high school graduates; to increase the number of black high school students aspiring to a college education; and to make it possible financially for black high school graduates to earn a college degree. Program success will be measured in terms of the following outcomes: successful high school completion, earning of an Associate in Arts degree at Miami-Dade, completion of a Bachelor's degree at a college of the student's choice.

Seventy-five (75) black tenth grade students will be selected from the Dade County Public Schools to participate in the pilot program.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Student Scholarship Bank Account -- The Black Student Opportunity Scholarship Program is based upon academic achievement. Each student will be awarded for performance in accordance with his/her annual accumulated grade point average in four designated college preparatory courses including the following: English Communication, Mathematics, Natural or Physical Science, and Social Science.

The earned value of each grade at the high school level will be based upon the following grade and monetary value system: for each "C", $30; for each "B", $60; and for each "A", $90. The college will establish a "bank account" in the name of each participant. Assuming a student would earn a "B" average in each of the four designated subjects during the first year, then he/she would have placed into an individual "bank account" a total of $240 by the student's sponsor. The Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation would match this amount, thus, providing the student with an amount of $480 for the first year. This amount would accrue until the end of the student's high school completion. Upon graduation, the accumulated amount would be used for enrollment at Miami-Dade. By reason of the student's income level, he or she may qualify for additional federal financial assistance.

As students enter Miami-Dade for the first two years of study, the value of each grade would increase and accumulate at an earned rate of $40 for a "C", $80 for a "B", and $120 for an "A", again, with the first match by the student's donor and the second match by the Mitchell Wolfson Sr. Foundation (See Appendix A for full scholarship program).

The amounts earned and accumulated during the student's college freshman and sophomore year will be available for transfer to the upper level university of the student's choice.

Student Sponsor Selection -- An Urban League Education Committee composed of representatives from the Urban League, Miami-Dade, Dade schools and the community, will design and market a donor campaign to solicit financial sponsors for each student.

Sponsors will be solicited from key individuals and organizations including fraternities, sororities, churches, professional and business associations, including the corporate business community.

Student and Family Contribution -- Consistent with the expectations of the Urban League, each student and his/her family are expected to contribute funds from the student's summer earnings or family savings. This is intended to provide a sense of accountability for individual and family development.

Moreover, the program will emphasize the need for each student to develop a sense of service to the community, in terms of helping others and the community develop to their maximum potential.

Student Expectations -- Students are expected to complete high school and achieve no less than a "C" average. The school and college will monitor each student's academic progress through Miami-Dade's established computerized systems called Academic Alert and Advisement and Standards of Academic Progress.

In addition to their regular classes, students are expected to attend scheduled individual and group sessions with their mentors, as well as other planned programs with their parents.

Students who require extra academic assistance are expected to attend planned tutorial sessions within their schools or during Saturdays at the college.

Students who choose or are required to drop out of the program due to personal, academic, or other reasons will give up their rights to any accumulated scholarship funds. These funds will then be used to assist other eligible students.

Cooperating University -- The college will solicit the participation of prestigious public and private universities at the state and national levels in order to obtain sponsorship for the last two years leading to the bachelor's degree. These arrangements will be made through the office of the Miami-Dade President. The District Office of the Student Dean will follow-up each positive commitment to assure the level of university participation.

Each student will be given an opportunity to choose the college or university of his/her choice.

APPENDIX A

MODEL FUNDING

MODEL FUNDING

The following would be the scholarship "bank account" for a typical student maintaining a "B" average.

	Year	Sponsor	Wolfson Foundation	Cooperating University	Fund Available for Scholarship
1	10th Grade	$ 240	$ 240		
2	11th Grade	240	240		
3	12th Grade	240	240		
4	Freshman Year	400	400		$ 720*/**
5	Sophomore Year	400	400		720
6	Junior Year			$ 800	1,600**
7	Senior Year			800	1,600**
	TOTAL	$1,520	$1,520	$1,600	$4,640

* M-DCC fees estimated at $720 per year.
** It is expected that students would be eligible for additional federal and/or institutional financial aid to complete a full package.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

1. The program is structured and the requirements concrete and understandable.
2. The program incorporates the essential elements for student success.
   A. Involvement with a caring role model.
   B. Raising aspirations and providing motivation.
   C. Providing incentive to enroll in, and succeed in, solid academic courses.
   D. Opening options to complete a baccalaureate degree at many universities, while recognizing that most students in the program will need the work at Miami-Dade to prepare for success at the university upper division.

SECTION IV

BLACK STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACADEMIC PREPARATION PROGRAM

RATIONALE

In the opinion of this writer, two major events have influenced the participation of blacks in higher education during the latter half of the 1970s: The Bakke decision and the educational reform movement.

The Bakke decision set into motion a different interpretation of "equal access" and equal opportunity and thus defined a new direction for the academic preparation and participation of educationally at-risk students in higher education.

As a consequence of the Bakke fall out, the new direction for "equal access" has come to mean the student's ability to enroll in higher education based upon relative achievement measured by standardized test.

The Bakke decision was followed by an educational reform movement that was first initiated through an assessment of our public schools in a Nation at Risk. This movement has now taken root in higher education.

There was mounting evidence that students entering higher education lacked the basic academic skills to perform at an expected college level. In order to remedy this situation, curricular reforms were instituted to raise the level of academic performance of entering students. As a consequence, an acceptable level of performance on standardized tests has become the ticket for college admission at many higher education institutions.

The State of Florida took the lead in this movement by mandating the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST). Satisfactory results on each of the four subjects of the CLAST has become a condition for admission to the upper level of all colleges and universities receiving state financial aid.

Since the inception of the CLAST in October 1983, black students have scored lower than their white or Hispanic counterparts in every category. The examination has become a barometer, indicating the level of black participation in the state university system.

Standards for passing each of the four subjects of the CLAST were raised in 1986 and are scheduled to increase again in 1989. McCabe points out that the percentage of students projected to meet the 1989 standards is less than half of the number currently passing the test. It is predicted that the impact of the 1989 standards will greatly reduce the total number of students attending the State University System. Even though the impact will adversely affect the participation of all students, the impact upon blacks and Hispanics will be devastating. McCabe asserts that:

> The number of black students proceeding to the junior year would be reduced by 90 percent, and Hispanics by 80 percent from the 1982 level based upon the 1989 test standards; only 363 black students in the entire State of Florida would proceed to the junior year in the State University System. For Hispanics the number would be 767.

The rise of the standardized testing meritocracy has added a new barrier to the participation of minority students in higher education.

Traditionally, American secondary schools follow the lead and practices of colleges and universities in selecting those students who would normally succeed in the educational hierarchy. In order to reverse this trend, new approaches for increasing the pool of minority students must be undertaken. American schools and colleges must increase the talent bank by picking new winners as the country struggles to retain its competitive edge in a global economy. The level of academic preparation must then produce desirable changes in students, or more simply, to make a difference in their current conditions. Academic preparation must occur

at an earlier level in the student's educational experience. Students who test as deficient in either of the basic information skills should be required to obtain extra assistance in the area(s) of deficiency. The process of instruction should be designed to liberate and to remove the fears and anxieties that impede learning.

GOAL

The goal of the academic preparation model of the Black Student Opportunity Program is to increase the pool of well prepared black high school graduates; to increase the number of black high school students aspiring to a college education; and to make it possible financially for black high school graduates to earn a college degree. Program success will be measured in terms of the following outcomes: successful high school completion, earning of an Associate in Arts degree at Miami-Dade, completion of a Bachelor's degree at a college of the student's choice.

Seventy-five (75) black tenth grade students will be selected from the Dade County Public Schools to participate in the pilot program.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Components of the academic preparation model will consist of the following strategies:

1. Student development
2. Instructional support

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Research Implications - Any program for academic preparation should consider the personal characteristics of the learner as the basis for learning.

The literature suggests that there are interfacing personal variables influencing the academic development of students. Learning requires self-discipline, intensity of effort, and a willingness to take reasonable risks. Self affirmation and the development of academic self-confidence then become key issues in the learning of new skills. An understanding of the personal variables which influence the learning process may best be accomplished through an examination of significant research findings with reference to this topic.

Abatso (1979) examined personal variables associated with academic development and behavioral attempts to master the expectations, demands, and roles inherent in the development of an "intellectual work ethic" in a sample of black freshman students. The results of her study demonstrated that an individual's sense of personal control in relationship to his/her environment is significantly related to achievement and coping skills (behavior related to the manner in which students attempt to master the academic demands of the classroom). Individuals possessing high coping skills tend to exhibit high self-esteem and self autonomy. They demonstrate less need to conform and generally view the opportunity structure as more open to them. They also tend to attribute their successes and failures to internal rather than external factors and are more likely to put forth greater effort to overcome academic shortcomings.

On the other hand, students exhibiting low coping skills tend to be more external in the sense of personal control of their environment, indicating their perception of the influence of external factors on shaping outcomes and events.

Abatso also demonstrated that three variables: verbal ability (student's knowledge of words and his/her ability to understand written

language); perception of the opportunity structure (one's perception of whether the opportunity structure is open or closed for him/her); and coping behavior significantly discriminate between high and low achievers.

These personality variables result from learning and social impact and are greatly enhanced through positive interaction within the academic/social environment of an educational setting.

A clear understanding of these personal variables and their effects upon achievement provides a framework for the design of an academic preparation program that encourages maximum intellectual development.

Since coping behaviors may be taught, a well planned student development program will be instituted. The program will be designed to improve student behavior in two major areas:

1. Self-Management Skills Development Strategy: The outcome of this strategy is intended to seek improvements in the areas of:

   A. Self-concept of ability through confidence-building;

   B. Sense of personal control in one's environment;

   C. Strategies for handling perceived closed opportunities structures.

2. Educational and Personal Development Strategy: This strategy is intended to assist students to explore career options based upon a pragmatic self assessment of one's interests, and abilities for the purpose of formulating an educational and personal development plan.

Self-Management Skills Development Strategy - Self-management skills development will include a number of strategies:

First, students will need to develop a consciousness of themselves as learners. They will need to understand their strengths and limitations in order to build upon a "developing model" rather than one of "deprivation." In this regard, sessions will be organized to assist students to understand their cognitive styles of learning. This will

include the variety of ways in which students process information, approach learning tasks, and pace themselves.

Second, major focus will be given to alternative ways of problem-solving. Intervention strategies will be provided with reference to dealing effectively with the academic and emotional demands of intellectual development within a school or college setting. Specific situations will be presented, assisting students in learning how to stay in control of emotions as well as reducing certain levels of anxiety.

Third, sessions on time management, study and test taking skills will be emphasized in order to assist students in formulating good habits in planning and organizing time, talent, and resources.

Fourth, the issue of motivation from the perspective of conditions confronting the black student will be emphasized. Issues such as societal perceptions of black intelligence and academic performance will be clarified. Assisting each student with the development of a belief in "self", and utilization of the power of group organization to bring about positive changes for self and group improvement will be stressed. Clarification of expectations and commitments to the "intellectual work ethic" will be highlighted.

Educational and Personal Development Strategy - The educational and personal development strategy will focus on the following:

First, a career assessment program will be implemented to provide the student with an opportunity to assess his or her skills, abilities, and interests as the basis for career planning.

Second, each student will be responsible for developing long range educational and personal development plans for formulating a mission in life.

Third, academic advisement sessions will be organized to assist each student with establishing and clarifying educational and personal goals.

Fourth, career related visits to business and industry will be arranged through the mentor program in order to help students become familiar with the world of work.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Academic Skills Assessment - An academic assessment profile of each student's previous standardized achievement test scores will be examined to determine their basic skills levels. Based upon these results, students will receive guidance in selection of appropriate courses to prepare for college admission. In addition, a number of personality variables will be assessed in the following areas: self-concept of ability, locus of control, and perception of the opportunity structure. Data from personality assessment results will be used to develop strategies for behavior modification to assist students with developing academic self-confidence and a sense of personal autonomy.

Course Selection and Academic Support - Students will be required to enroll in the college preparatory program. A significant component of the academic preparatory program is tutorial assistance. The primary objective of the tutorial service is to help each student strengthen behavior in the following areas:

1. Spend extra time on those academic tasks in which the student demonstrates deficiency.

2. Increase the amount of academic coverage in those areas that are measured by a standardized test instrument.

3. Increase the level of success in daily classroom, home assignments, and unit tests including mastery of academic content.

Student academic progress will be monitored on a three-week interval. Students requiring assistance will be assigned to attend tutorial sessions during the seventh period or attend scheduled Saturday classes at Miami-Dade Community College.

Evaluative Feedback - A system of academic alert will be utilized to provide individualized feedback to students and their parents regarding their levels of academic progress. Computerized individual letters will inform students and their parents as to whether or not academic progress and attendance are satisfactory in specific courses.

Recognition of Student Achievement - An annual planned event will be organized to recognize and award outstanding achievements. Parents, mentors and sponsors will be invited to participate.

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